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SUBJECT: VIEWS OF TOP URUGUAYAN MILITARY LEADERS

CINCSO FOR POLAD

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. DURING THE COURSE OF RECENT HIGH- LEVEL VISITS BY KOREAN AND NATIONALIST CHINESE MILITARY FIGURES, I HAVE HAD OCCASION TO COME INTO FREQUENT AND PROLONGED CONTACT WITH URUGUAY- AN MILITARY LEADERS IN RELAXED AND NATURAL CIRCUMSTANCES. AS A RESULT OF THESE OBSERVATIONS AND CONVERSATIONS I NOW HAVE A BETTER BASIS OF PERSONAL JUDGMENT CONCERNING THE ORIENTATION AND PERSONALITY OF SOME OF THE MORE IMPORTANT URUGUAYAN MILITARY FIGURES AND THE PROBABLE IMPLICATIONS THESE WILL HAVE ON US- URUGUAYAN RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. THERE FOLLOW AS OF POSSIBLE INTEREST HIGHLIGHTS OF TWO RECENT CONVERSATIONS I CONSIDER PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT:

A. NAVY COMMANDER- IN- CHIEF CONRADO OLAZABAL RECENTLY WENT TO CON- SIDERABLE LENGTH TO EMPHASIZE TO ME THE DIFFICULT SITUATION IN WHICH URUGUAY, A BUFFER STATE, FINDS ITSELF AS A RESULT OF THE IN- CREASING CONFLICT OF INTEREST S AND COMPETITION BETWEEN NEIGHBOR-
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ING BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA. OLAZABAL SAID URUGUAY AS A COUNTER-BALANCE TO ANTICIPATED INTENSIVE BRAZILIAN AND ARGENTINE PRESSURES WOULD TURN INCREASINGLY TO THE US. OLAZABAL RECALLED THAT IN 19 TH CENTURY WHEN SIMILAR SITUATION EXISTED THE BRITISH HAD BRILLIANTLY FULFILLED THE ROLE AS COUNTERBALANCING POWER. OLAZABAL SAID US NOW WOULD BE CALLED UPON TO FILL THIS ROLE AS URUGUAY ALONE COULD NOT WITHSTAND THESE EXPECTED PRESSURES. HE SAID US ESPECIALLY WOULD HAVE TO SUPPLY URUGUAYAN ARMED FORCES WITH REQUIRED MILITARY HARDWARE TO ASSURE URUGUAY' S SECURITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF ACTION. HE IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN OBTAINING AT LEAST ONE MORE DESTROYER ESCORT FROM THE US. OLAZABAL ALSO SPOKE WITH FERVOR OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PALMAR HYDROELECTRIC DAM WHICH HE SAID WOULD BE A MONUMENT OF THE URUGUAYAN MILITARY' S REFORMATION. FROM THIS SYNTHESIS DEPT. WILL APPRECIATE PROBABLE SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON US- URUGUAYAN RELATIONS THAT SUCH TRENDS IN THE URUGUAYAN MILITARY' S LINE OF THOUGHT COULD HAVE. ALTHOUGH OLAZABAL IS DUE TO STEP DOWN SOON AS CINC AND HE NEVER HAD MUCH PERSONAL POWER, I CONSIDER HIS COMMENTS AS REFLECTING IDEAS HELD BY MANY URUGUAYAN MILITARY.

B. FOLLOWING UP ON A CONVERSATION INITIATED DURING A KOREAN EMBASSY RECEPTION, I CALLED ON GENERAL GREGORIO ALVAREZ, CHIEF OF THE JOINT MILITARY STAFFS, FOR THE PURPOSE OF CLARIFYING A NUMBER OF MISUNDERSTANDINGS WHICH APPEAR TO CHARACTERIZE ALVAREZ' S VIEWS OF THE US. GENERAL ALVAREZ AGREED THAT CLARIFICATION WOULD BE USEFUL. WE DISCUSSED ALLEGATIONS BY SOME ELEMENTS IN THE URUGUAYAN MILITARY THAT THE US HAD INTERVENED IN THE FEBRUARY CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE CIVILIAN AND MILITARY BY WITHHOLDING APPROVAL OF THE PURCHASE OF AMMUNITION AND OF FIELD JACKETS. ALVAREZ WAS PARTICULARLY UPSET THAT A US COMPANY WAS CHARGING \$22 FOR A FIELD JACKET COSTING \$5 IN HONG KONG. AFTER GOING INTO THESE MATTERS IN CONSI
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